/67 cont./
538 that he could be the Kanaima of the night before and went to
776 see his brother-in-law; he wanted to see the wound but he resisted showing it to him; then he was even more suspicious and by force he tore off the bandage. The arrow was still stuck in; then he recognized that it was his own and, pulling it out of him violently, he said:

"This arrow is mine; you were not shooting toucans, /68/ you were trying to act like Kanaima, and this happened so that you will learn a lesson."

And let what has been said suffice, since the proverb warns us that "intelligentibus, pauca."

## Chapter XVII

### Are the Indians Shameless or Modest?

100

145. Clothing and virtues, modesty and morality. 146. Individual morality. 147. Modesty seeks clothing. 148. Nudists and Freudians. 149. Accidental morality. 150. From the word to the act. 151. Knowledge of morality or ethics. 152. Polygamy. 153. Negative and positive morality.

145. This question, asked perhaps in a merely physiological sense, gives us the basis for dealing at the same time with the morality of the Indians, since, according to what St. Paul said, clothing is the image of internal virtues and modesty, of moral decency.

•156 146. In the first place, it is clear that one cannot talk of the Indians in the plural without making any distinction, as one can about mice, since for them, as for everyone else, there is value in the saying that "not even the fingers of the hand are the same." Every individual among them, simply because they

/68 cont./

●155 are free persons, has his own moral conduct. And even though among the Indians there does not exist the great discrimination and complexity as among us, neither can we fall into the utopia of believing them identical to the point of repeating the saying that "their faces and their characters are like grains of rice."

577 Having made this reservation, we shall say that shame and modesty are words which form a part of the linguistic fund of these Indians and, consequently, the ideas of their moral fund. We speak of modesty in physiological actions and in the modest parts of the body; and of shame for immoral actions in the broadest sense of this word.

vas 147. To say that clothing engenders modesty and not vice versa and to suppose that customs (mores) create the concept of morality and not the reverse is to invert the concepts provided by history and by intimate personal experience.

It is true that clothes produce a certain kind of accidental modesty; and thus, verbi gracia, those of us who use long robes or long trousers would be embarrassed to walk around with trousers up to the knee or a tunic that only comes halfway down the leg. But there is a minimum of /69/ clothing required by the minimum of natural modesty, whether they be the mythical fig leaves, the classic grape leaves, or the native loincloths made of glass beads, palm leaves, the neck of a gourd, or a /piece of/ tree bark /concha de arboles/.

291 Thus it is that not even among the Pemón nor even among
171 other even poorer and more isolated tribes, such as the Sapé, Arutaní, Sirianá, and Motilón, have we ever found an Indian in puris naturalibus, or a naked Indian. By means of trade with neighboring tribes or by their own industry they all manage not to be without at least a humble guayuco, loincloths, a covering of foliage, or whatever it might be called.

/90 cont./

583 196. To constitute a family, in general, no other thing
584 is influential except the mutual inclination of the parties and
593] their complete freedom; in such a way that marriages are frequently made against the will of the parents, sometimes on trips or in distant rancherias and even with individuals of a different tribe; and that the return of a son or a daughter, after a long absence, to his or her parents, introducing to them the new daughter-in-law or new son-in-law, which so often appears in stories, is a faithful transcription of real life.

583 Material interest then customarily flourishes on the lips of
606 the woman's progenitors with respect to their son-in-law, since they consider him to have benefitted (as in fact he has) through the acquisition of the daughter raised by them with so much work, and as a consequence they usually ask him to help them in their chores or in the building of houses; but from this it should not be inferred that this is a matter of purchase-sale nor of inferiority of the woman.

621 197. Concerning the lack of ultra-family organization,
622 the so often cited Juan Pimentel says in his geographic report
643 of Caracas Province the following: "There are not nor has it
[651] been possible to confirm that in all this province of Caracas there have been any caciques or lords of estate or seigniory, nor do they pay tribute to anyone."

105 And more extensively he says in Chapter 15: "The natives
[622] of this province did not have nor do they have any government or police in matters of justice nor in anything which resembles this; it is all personal independence, for as there are not, nor have there been, caciques or lords, they have not had anyone
264] to obey, and thus Peter is as good as his master; because when they eat they get together by house or barrios, and the first to stick in his hand might be the lowest rather than his better,
[554] and the boy rather than the old man; for among them there is neither superiority nor betterness by way of lineage nor in any
156] other respect; except that, if in some way there is some respected Indian, it is by way of being a piache, as has been said,